

This article describes an Executive Development Program implemented at the Naval Training Equipment Center (NAVTRAEQUIPCEN) in Orlando, Fla. Hopefully, recounting the development and implementation of this program will be helpful to other activities planning such a program.

Everyone knows the theoretical value of executive development and practically everyone is familiar with the approach of establishing such a program. Unfortunately, very few activities manage to implement an effective Executive Development Program. There always seem to be too many obstacles to overcome. Resources are reduced before the program gets off the ground, or the activity's leadership changes, or any number of other things happen which scuttle the program. In spite of the obstacles inherent in starting a program of this type, executive development at the NAVTRAEQUIPCEN seems to be *an idea whose time has come*. The program consists of these major elements:

1. Assessment of future manpower needs;
2. Design of the program;
3. Identification and selection of participants;
4. Implementation of the program; and
5. Evaluation of the program.

### Assessing future needs

To project the future manpower needs of the Naval Training Equipment Center, an analysis was made of managers eligible to

retire within 3 years. To this data was added an estimate of turnover from other sources which resulted in a 3-year forecast of middle and top management turnover. While we felt it important to consider the needs of the activity, the primary aim of the program was to identify individuals with high potential and to help them develop to meet the Navy's future manpower needs.

### Program design

The program design was based on the following assumptions:<sup>1</sup>

1. Since the program would concentrate on the development of managers as opposed to technical specialists, the skills and knowledges essential for successful management had to be identified and experiences provided which would help participants develop those skills and knowledges.
2. Since the participants would be at different stages of development, it would be necessary to determine the needs of each participant and develop an individual development plan to meet those needs.
3. Since effective growth and develop-

ment comes about primarily as a result of *on-the-job experiences*, the program would be directed toward providing meaningful special assignments which would contribute to the maximum growth of the participants. These work assignments would be supplemented by appropriate formal training.

The length of the program for each participant was set at approximately 3 years, with the provision that participants would leave the program before the end of this time if appropriate. The program also provides for including new participants periodically, based on anticipated manpower needs.

At this point, we faced the problem of determining whether there was any formal training applicable to all participants. Participants would likely have diverse backgrounds and possess different levels of management skills. It was also likely that they would manage vastly different work forces in the future, e.g., scientists and engineers, education specialists, and program analysts.

After an in-depth search of the literature and consultation with others in management development programs, we concluded that effectiveness in three major areas was essential to success in any managerial position.<sup>2</sup> These major areas were identified as:

<sup>1</sup> Craig, Robert L. & Bittel, Lester R. *Training and Development Handbook*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.

<sup>2</sup> Members of the Training Research Forum. *The Emperor's Clothes*. Training and Development Journal, Jul. 1970, 2-9.